# INDIA'S POLICY TOWARDS THE INDIAN OCEAN: A STUDY OF TRADITIONAL AND NON- TRADITIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS

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## INTRODUCTION

The Indian Ocean is world's third largest Ocean after Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and it is also the richest Ocean in the world because of its geostrategic location. The Indian Ocean connects the major regions of world like, African cost, South West Asia, East Asia and North Asia. It also connects the seven different water ways that are called as 'seven chokepoints of the Indian Ocean' and also linked with the thirty eight states of the world. The Indian Ocean has busiest trading routs in worldwide and maximum coastlines are dominated by the countries like: Indonesia, Australia, India and South Africa. The world superpower nations have always been attracted towards this region from the historic period. Britishers and Portuguese started the trade in the Indian Ocean. Britishers use the rout of Suez Canal for trading and they entered in India as trader but they establish their dominance on India and whole of Asia. Basically, this region is important from economic and political perspectives because it provides the markets and also offers pivot position to control the whole Asia. In this context as quoted by Anu Unny what the US Admiral Alfred Mahan stated that, "whoever control the Indian Ocean, dominates Asia. The Ocean is a key to seven seas. In 21st century, the destiny of world will be decided its waters"(R, Suresh. 2014: 52).

At present, the Indian Ocean is major attraction point for the superpowers like, China and the USA which are competitors in the region, and India is the nation which trying to balance both of them in term of protecting its national interests. There is no doubt that the position of India is very strategic, however, facing myriad territorial insecurities. India is covered by water from the three sides, East, West, South and The Indian Ocean is situated in the South of India. Indian foreign policy always focused on the Western and Northern borders. During the post independence period, India was facing so many internal as well as external threats from its Western and Northern borders and that's why Indian government fully focused towards their land boundaries, and the government of India did not pay adequate attention towards their maritime policy in the Indian Ocean. In the post independence period, first Prime Minister Nehru had desired to make India capable enough to lead the world. Later during 1970s Prime Minister Indira Gandhi adopted realist approach. In this context Scott argued "Indira Gandhi looked towards India's region; but this was a focus on its immediate land neighbors Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh. The Indira Doctrine focused on India taking a position of leadership in South Asia, but land power was crucial underpinning for the doctrine"(Malone 2015: 467). In this context

Scott stated that "The Indian Ocean represented geography of threat for India" (Ibid). However with the passing of time India began paying attention towards littoral states. Now days, Indian Ocean became the topmost priority for the Indian foreign policy, because Indian maritime borders poses many threats to India. China emerged as strongest competitor for India in the Indian Ocean region and now that is the most serious threat perceived by India. For Scott, "Two particular extra regional powers affected India's position within the Indian Ocean, the United States and China" (Ibid). Further, in this regards it has also stated that, "China has developed his navy (PLAN) to dominate high seas. It has been said by the scholar that domination of sea are necessary for the establishment of a strong nation. China has perceived that India and Japan have emerged challenger in Asia and undermining China's aspiration which has been the reason that promoted China to encircled India"(R Suresh, 2014: 96). China always tried to counter the Indian influence in the Indian Ocean Region. In this context, Brewster stated that "China's ability to project power into the Indian Ocean, as well as China's need to deployed the Indian Ocean through choke point principally the Strait of Malacca" (Brewster, 2010: 5).

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Security is a multidimensional concept as it covers all types of threats which are posed to the states by the enemy states or by non state actors as well. Whenever a state makes its policy, security is the topmost priority. The States security concerns such as, border security, human security and socio-economic security and among all, territorial security holds most important position in the policy framing process. For India, security is a very sensitive issue from the independence. India's territory has been facing various security threats, especially from its Western & Northern borders. India covers with the seas from three sides and at present the major security threat is emerged from water. For the longer period Indian policy makers have not paid much attention towards the Indian Maritime Borders and towards the Indian Ocean, yet India has the significant position from maritime perspectives especially in the Indian Ocean. But from the last few years, India predicted that their water borders are not safe. India has perceived the state security threats and nontraditional security threats in Indian Ocean. The most of the superpower nations are involve in Indian Ocean Region only for their interests and involvement of China is a very major problem for India. China follows the expansionist policy by which China has been expanding its influence in the region and establishes the relations with the littoral states to

counter India's influence in the Indian Ocean region. India is facing nontraditional threats like, terrorism, piracy and trafficking. All the illegal activities are regular in the region and the terrorism is much serious security threats for India. In this circumstances, India need to take the strong step towards these problems but India has no strong policy to counter all these problems.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of security has always been most dominating in the international politics. The sense of security, generally taken from the states security but from the last two decades 'security' not only deals with the 'state security' but another issues like, human security, food security and terrorism. At present, states are compelled to deal with both sense of security; traditional and non-traditional. When the states start making their policy, their first priority is given to 'state security' the traditional one. Security is the term; 'a state feels secure from every type of threats.' Bajpai and Pant argued, "The all-consuming nature of the cold war agenda seemed to demand the security is understood by the main contestants very much in way that were consistent with the realistic approach to international relations" (Bajpai and Pant, 2013: 1). Security is the main focus of 'Realism', the most prominent theory of international politics. This theory sees the world with the realistic and pragmatic perspective. This theory deals with the two major concept of international relations; 'Security' and 'Power'. For every nation security is the prime interest and to fulfill this interest, power is a main source. Power and security can be called as the two sides of same coin. The state removes its insecurity from the persuasion of power which creates insecurity for other states. According to Secretary General Report, "Security is a condition, in which states consider that there is no danger of military attack, political pressure or economic coercion, So that they are able to pursue freely their own development and progress" (United Nations Report 1987:1). For the realist thinkers, the international situation is anarchy and there is a lack of central authority which could maintain the peace by controlling the behavior of the nation states. The absence of such authority creates the situation of 'security dilemma' (Herz 1950). In this context according to the classical realist "structural anarchy or the absence of a central authority to settle disputes is the essential feature of the contemporary system and it gives rise to security dilemma" (Holsti: 4). Realist also argued that, states maximize their power for their security.

The Greek classical realist thinker, Thucydides (460-411 B.C.) in his famous book "The History of Peloponnesian War" (421 BC) narrates the struggle between Athens and Sparta to control the Hellenic world. He defined this struggle in terms of dynamics of power politics. Similarly, the Chinese realist scholar Sun Tzu (544 - 496 B.C.) in "The Art of War" (5th Century B.C) defined the military strategy and tactics and also believed that the international politics is marked by the constant power struggles and conflicts.

The renowned Indian Realist thinker Kautilya (371 B.C. - 283 B.C.) analysed his foreign policy perspective in his famous writing "Arthashastra". His foreign policy doctrine deals with 'Mandal Theory' and 'The Shadguna Theory'. His Mandal theory is geopolitical and geo-strategical. He observed and analysed 'enemy's enemy as a friend' in the international politics which based on the assumption that, 'All the neighboring states are enemy and enemy's enemy is the natural ally'. The Shadguna theory is the six fold policy which directs the state how to achieve its national interests. In this context, Kautilya stated that every state acts in order to maximize its power and self interest, and therefore, moral or ethical obligations do not have any scope in the international politics.

Further, the tradition of realism was pushed forward by the thinkers like Niccole Machiavelli (1469- 1527), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and believed that states maximize their military power for their security, and if state becomes offensive, it's acceptable. In the world of realism, one of the prominent thinkers Machiavelli also analysed the state security in his very famous writing "The Prince" (1532). According to him, states do any exercise for the security; even states take decision out of the track of morality. The British realist thinker E.H. Carr (1892-1982) argued in his path breaking book "Twenty Years Crisis" (1939), that state is the principal actor in international politics. The first responsibility of state is to fulfill of the state's interest and continuously expand their military and always ready for the wars, so he also talk about the offensive actions as J.J. Mersheimer (offensive realist) focused later in his book "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics" (2001) and he characterized the hegemonic character of the state. "International system is anarchic, state inherently possess some offensive military capability which gives them the wherewithal to hurt and possible destroy each other and the most basic motive of states is survival" (Mersheimer, 2001). The current example is China, which has the strong desire to establish the hegemony on the Indian Ocean and for which it has been expanding

its military in the Indian Ocean Region. As Kirshner quoted in his article that, "China is rising offensively" (Kieshner, 2010: 54). Hans J. Morgenthau is also one major prominent thinker of Realism and he focused on the selfishness and power as also describe by Thomas Hobbes. He is influenced by the Hobbesian philosophy, which focuses that the human nature is selfish and argued in famous book 'Leviathan' (1660) Human being is extremely individualistic rather than moral and social and are subject to "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceases only in death" (Leviathan XI:2). Hobbes said that, the situation of state is anarchic and the people struggled and also argued that "Such a war is of man against every man" (XII: 8). That struggle is the core of Morgenthau's philosophy, he said in his famous work "Politics among the Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace" (1948) that International Politics, like all the politics is struggle for power". He also argued that there are struggles for power in all around the world, every nation has rivalry with other nations, and maximization of power is the need for the states to secure their interest. In this regards Burchill argued, "For Morgenthau, International politics was a struggle for power between states: the pursuit of national interest was a normal, unavoidable and desirable activity" (Burchill, 2001: 80). Hobbes's view on anarchic nature of state is supported by very prominent scholar of this school, Kenneth Waltz, "The Theory of International Politics" (1979). He argued neo realism focuses on the four components; one is international structure, second is fear, third is survival and fourth is self help. Hobbesian concept is that of the anarchic states of nature, seen as entailing a state war- and such a war is of every man against every man" (Leviathan XII). Waltz also said the international system is anarchic there is no rules and regulation and that why, the environment is full of fear for states survival they need to pursuit the power then they will able to self help. Waltz argued that "States do not willingly place themselves in situations of increased dependence and in a self- help system, considerations of security subordinate economic gain to political interest" (Waltz 1979: 107). Barry Buzan argued in his famous writing. "New Pattern of Global Security in Twenty-first Century" 1991, "bottom line of security is survival".

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Brewster (2010),** analysed India's strong interests in the Indian Ocean; he explained India's change outlook towards littoral states in the resent year. Earlier, India had been facing the direct threats from the land borders 'North and West', simultaneously; Indian force was dealing with the internal insurgencies after the cold war. Author analysed that Indian Ocean has the potential to change the destiny of India to achieve the super power status in world. He also clarified that in the decade of 1990s, India has been focusing on the Indian Navy and increased the naval expenditure. All these activities showed Indian's efforts to strengthen its naval power to increase influence in the Indian Ocean. India wants to cover the chokepoints and balancing the relations with China. Author also clarified the activities of external power like; USA in this region; US support the Indian ambitions in the Indian Ocean. The USA also feels that India is only country who provide the security in this region. America used India as the balancing power towards China. Author also has analyses the China- India competitions in the region. China has also the aspirations to control over the Indian Ocean. China has established nexus with Pakistan and Sri Lanka and assisting them to construe ports. This policy of China is called the 'string of Pearl' through which China encircled the India. Author also said that India has established its cooperative relations with other countries of the Indian Ocean region and expand their policy beyond the South Asia keeping the perspective of security. He also said, in this region India is only country for other states who provide them security. If India wants to establish security in this region, India will have to focuses more on cooperation with the state of this region.

**Potgieter (2012),** analyses India's strategic position in the Indian Ocean and descriptively define its persuading threats. Firstly author deals with the location of Indian Ocean which gives it strategic importance. The Indian Ocean region is very rich from the perspective of the resources. He also highlighted the conflicts among the nations of that region. This region faced the lots of threats some from the extra regional powers and some from the non state actors. According to him, the Indian Ocean has always been must the attractive region for all the nations like the UK, USA, France etc. The European nations established the partnership with the nations those situated in this region and Pakistan and China has its own energy interest, and the countries like India has the multiple interests of security to maintained their interest in the region all states forcing their naval forces in the Indian Ocean. They also are trying to counter the nontraditional

threats like piracy, trafficking and terrorism. He also defined security of sea lanes of communications is also important for the economy of the countries. He includes the interest of china and said that china has not only the interest of economic but political as well in the region. China always tried to contain the political influence of India in the region. Author analyses that to counter all possible nontraditional threats all states of the region must established mutual cooperation and get rid of mutual mistrust.

**Michel and Sticklor (2012),** analyses the significance position of Indian Ocean and said that Indian Ocean has its own importance for the global trade and as well as states security perspective , because its connects many regions and seas of the world. Lots of security threats like, states security, economic security, and environment security are existing in the Indian Ocean Region. Author also analysis the verities of sources of these insecurities like, terrorism, trafficking and piracy. He also deals with some conflicts among the nations, particularly in African coast. He also argues that, after the cold war world interest of power has been shift from Pacific to Indian Ocean. Even super naval powers of the world are also taken interest in the Indian Ocean and the reason behind it is growth of China. Author also define that, there were some International conventions to dilute these issues.

**Mattoo (2013),** analyses the importance of Indian Ocean and he said that, The Indian Ocean has strategic position from the economic, political, environmental point of view. This region has some sub-regions like, South Africa, Asia, and South East Asia. Author analyses the concept of regional security and said, in this region states easily cooperates with each other on the various bases like security of economy and political. He also said, there are non-state actors are involved and outsider nations are also interested in this region. He also said that, the states of this region much interested in the bilateral relations rather than multilateral relations. Author also consider the human security and suggested to the policy makers that they deals the concepts of security in the multidimensional way and regional security structure is only way to fight with non state actor, he also deals with the India- Australia's role in Indo- Pacific zone and said that they provide the stable security environment to Indian Ocean and Indo-pacific zone.

**Mohan (2013),** analyses the competitions between the two new emerging powerful states of Asian Continent, India and China. Author defines the competition between demons and deities in the Hindu Mythology. Firstly he clears that India and China emerged as marine power of the

Indian Ocean Region as well as in Indo Pacific region. Both the nations are countiniuesly expanding their naval exercises in the India Ocean Region. He also analyzed both nations have highly desirous to spread their influences in the India Ocean Region. Author also argues that the sea lane of communication is one major way for international trading and he clearly said that they try to protect that sea lane but actually they protect their self interests in this region. He also said that India and China both nations have extended topmost priority to their maritime interests, and for this they have allocated huge amount in their annual budget. Author also defines China's strategies towards various Oceans; China has enhanced its interest not only in the India Ocean Region but also in the Indo- Pacific zone. Chinese interest made uncomfortable to India. He also identified the USA as one major player the region. And the USA, China and India, this triangle has creates the 'Security Dilemma' in this region.

**Scott (2013),** clarified India's ambitions in the Indian Ocean and its efforts to achieve it. Indian system has not working proficiently because there are no formal strategies towards Indian Ocean. And Earlier Indian government didn't focus on the Indian Ocean. Further, Scott also clarified that Indian Navy plays a significant role but the earlier government totally ignored it governments paid much attention towards this region after the end of the end of cold war, and how it become the most priority now. India decided some specific goals to achieve are to maintains of the communication sea lanes, to increased the military strength and to strengthen maritime diplomacy. Which India feels, will be to contain the potential threats in the region. Author analyses that China- Pakistan nexus in the Indian Ocean has been the major challenge to India's security. India has been trying to rebalance China in the region.

**Singh (2013),** analyses the strategic location of the Indian Ocean which makes it the most interest area for nations worldwide. Author analyses the security perspectives in the Indian Ocean and mainly focused on India's stand towards security in the Indian Ocean. He described that its prime location makes it busy Ocean in the world. This Ocean is the life of the world economy and Indian Ocean is the attraction point for super power nations. Author also describe that the Indian Ocean has lots of tensions among the nations but the regional feeling of this region gives the base of mutual cooperation among different nations of this region. He also defined that Indian Ocean is the ground of the competition. Every nation in region is trying to protect its interest. India and China are two most strong competitor of this region. Both the

nations have the strong desire to dominate the region. India has many interests in the region but China poses major challenge to India's interests. He also describes that China enhance its naval capabilities in the region. Among all other powers, the USA also interferes in the region. Author also analyses that India's policy in region is framed with keeping mind the policies of China and USA. Author also focuses on the Indian efforts to protect its interest in the Indian Ocean Region such as India's enhancing its naval forces in the coastal areas.

**Bajpai and Pant (2014),** focused on the India's national security policy India has faced the terrorist attack from its maritime boundary and also India collected the evidence showing its linkages with that they belongs to the Pakistan based group Lashker –e- Taiba, but Pakistan again and again refusing it. According to them the security is not only belongs to the territorial but with the internal securities also. They also said that security was the realistic concept in the past few years. India's national security policy seems like the Indian foreign policy. The security of India is threatened by only two countries like Pakistan and China. We already fought four wars with Pakistan and ones with the China. China's rapid growth is most harmful for India. Bajpai and Pant both deals with the three key components like terrorism, internal insurgency, and nuclear weapons. Terrorist groups like; lasher-e-Tibia and Indian Mujahedeen are the most active groups in India. The Maoist are the major region of internal insurgency as well in other part authors also deals with the nuclear policy of India .The nuclear testing become important for Indian security from the Pakistan and China. The defense policy of India prepared by the politician has been losing the offensiveness in implications, as it misses the potential to secure India's national security.

**Brewster (2014),** deals every part of the Indian Ocean Region and said that, Indian Ocean attracted the attentions of government, academician and scholars. He analyses that Indian Government has high ambitions in the Indian Ocean but their efforts are too slow and on that bases, India wants to expand its influence on Indian Ocean is the big challenge for India. Before independence India enjoy their centric position in the Indian Ocean through the British Empire but in post independence era, India looked towards Ocean after sixty years. Authors examine the India's strategies towards its aspirations in Indian Ocean. He analyses that, Indian Ocean is a battleground for the extra regional powers. Indian Ocean always be dominated by Europeans and even the USA is a game changer player in the Indian Ocean. China emerged as the regional

power. Author covers all these aspects and then analyses the India's policy towards the Indian Ocean, how India rebalance China and protect their interests in Indian Ocean from involvement of extra regional powers.

**R, Suresh (2014),** analyses the maritime security of India. Author focuses on traditional and nontraditional concepts of security. According to him, the traditional security concept deals with narrow view of security which means the security of state's territories and this view sounds like the militant idea of security. Author also deals with the security dimensions in the Indian Ocean. Author argues that, the Indian Ocean is one major insecure region of the world. It has so many threats like terrorism, climate change, nuclear proliferation, trafficking of narcotises, he also analyses Indian national security in Indian Ocean. The maritime boundary security is a complicated phenomena because it is related with the security of fisheries, industries, etc and the largest amount of trade are directly linked with the maritime so for the Indian navy has a challenge to secure not only the maritime borders but to provide the security to other things also. Author also says that after 26/11 the maritime has become topmost priority for Indian government but the government has major policy low as in implications. Further author also focuses China as major threat to India. China has established good relations with India's neighboring states which led to a quite serious.

**Abraham (2015),** analysed that India and China are two major competitors in the Indian Ocean Region. This Ocean is world's richest Ocean from the natural resources especially oil. There is one Sea Lane which is the base of the communication in this region. It connects the major chokepoints and these are the place from where oil is supplied. Author also argued that resources in the Indian Ocean invited China to interfere in this region. Author also said that China has largest interest in this region. The 'String of Pearl' policy of China is to contain India's influences and also poses security threats to India. With the increasing power, China has also increased its military activities in this region. China is using the very aggressive approach towards India's interests in region. Author also suggested that India must observe China's activities and engagements in the Indian Ocean. Besides China, other superpowers states like UK, USA are also peeping into the region. Therefore according to author superpowers rivalry in the region has to be taken seriously by India and must frame pro China policy to secure the national interests.

**Goud and Mookherjee (2015),** focused on China's maritime policy in the region and also stated that Indian Ocean has the prime location in the world and it connects many different regions like; Australia, Africa and Asia. Indian Ocean gives the platform to the world economy to perform in the progressive way. The major focuses of this book is China's policy towards Indian Ocean in terms of both politically and the economically as well. Author also the analyses that China is one of major threats for India which trying controls the Indian influence in the region. Author also said that the USA is also one major player in the region so India needs to ready counter them.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To study significance of India's position in the Indian Ocean Region.
2. To study India's security policy in the Region.
3. To study India's security threats in the Indian Ocean Region.
4. To study India's security collaboration with super power states in the region.
5. To study India's Policy Challenges in the Indian Ocean.

## HYPOTHESES

1. India holds the strategic position in the Indian Ocean.
2. India has week security policy in the Indian Ocean.
3. China is the serious security threat for India.
4. India is setting a collective security structure in the Indian Ocean by collaborating with the major powers.
5. Lack of clear perspective towards the Indian Oceanic policy is major challenge.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** Descriptive

## DATA COLLECTION

**Primary data:** The relevant data will be collected from the interviews of and discussions with the experts of this field, if possible.

**Secondary data:** The relevant data will be collected from government policy documents Books, Journals and all authentic internet websites and other published and unpublished documents.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The Indian Ocean holds a strategic position which gives the good opportunity to India towards its aspiration to lead the world. But another side, it invited other superpower nations to fulfill their interests that have increased the rivalry among them. This situation poses harm to India's security interest and concerns in the region. This proposed study is an attempt to examine the Indian foreign policy's perspective towards Indian Ocean and study the impact of rivalry among nations on Indian polices. The study will provide new outlook to Indian policy makers in the concerns of security of maritime borders in the Indian Ocean region. The study will also be significantly useful for the researchers, academician, students those are particularly interested in the studies of Indian's maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region.

## CHAPTERIZATION

1. Introduction
2. India's strategic position in the Indian Ocean.
3. India's security concerns: traditional and non-traditional.
4. India's policy in the region.
5. Indian military collaboration in the Indian Ocean.
6. Evolution of Indian Maritime Policy towards the Indian Ocean.
7. Conclusion

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